

**Memorandum of Facts and Circumstances  
Connected with the active Opposition by the French Half-Breeds  
in this Settlement to the prosecution of Government Surveys<sup>1</sup>**

Fort Garry, October 11, 1869

This day about 2 P.M. a messenger arrived, Mr. Farmer, Chairman<sup>2</sup> of Mr. Webb's party, employed in surveying a base line, or parallel of latitude, between townships 6 & 7 east of the meridian, on which service the party left a week ago today, bringing the unwelcome information from Mr. Webb that his further progress with the survey had been stopped by a band\* of some eighteen French Half-Breeds, headed by a man named Louis Riel.

Mr. Webb had projected the line to about the Fourth Section in Township 7, Second Range East, and being within, say, two and a half miles of the Red River, when this occurrence took place.<sup>3</sup>

He was ordered by the leader of the party at once to desist from further running the line, and in fact notified that he must leave the country on the south side of the Assiniboine, which country the party claimed as the property of the French Half-Breeds, and which they would not allow to be surveyed by the Canadian Government.

No arms were seen with the party, but by standing on the chain and using threats of violence if the Survey was persisted in, it became evident that to go on with the survey would probably have led to a collision, and Mr. Webb, in accordance with written instructions which I had previously given him, to provide for any such contingency, discontinued his work, and as the Half-Breeds would not allow him to remain encamped where he was, moved his camp to the main road on the Red River, waiting for orders, having sent off in the mean time Mr. Farmer, as above stated.

I at once waited on Dr. Cowan, the Chief Magistrate in the Settlement, and laying the facts of the case before him, requested that he would consult with the Governor, or such other Magistrate as he might think desirable to call in, and take such further steps with regard to this outrage as he and they might think called for under the circumstances.

I remarked to Dr. Cowan, at the same time, that I questioned whether, owing to the unsettled relation of the land tenure as regarded the Half-Breeds and Indians, and the particular irritation or sensitiveness that existed on the part of the French Half-Breeds in view of the transfer of the Territory and the assumption of the Government by Canada, it would be politic to take harsh measures towards the offenders in this case; but stated that, as he and his brother Magistrate knew the temper and feelings of the people in the Settlement generally, I left the matter in their hands, satisfied that they would do what would seem most advisable under the circumstances.

Before I left Dr. Cowan it was settled that he would call in another Magistrate Mr. Goulet, and consult with him as to what course to take.

J. S. Dennis

\* Names of Band;—Louis Riel, leader, De Saugré and Son, Baptiste Nona, Baptiste Treuau and three Sons, François Charest, Bideau Non, Edward Morin, Mannin Non, Janvive Richot, Benjamin Non, three others, names not known.

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence Related to Recent Disturbances in the Red River Settlement*. London: W. Clowes, 1870, pg. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Farmer was actually chainman for Webb's survey party.

<sup>3</sup> He was located on Andre Nault's Hayland Privilege.

Editor's note: De Saugre, is Sansregret, sometimes written Sangrait; Non, likely Nault, Charest is Charette, Janvive Richot is Jean Baptiste Ritchot *dit* Janvier, Treuau is likely Tourond.

A.H. Tremauden, in his book, "Hold High Your Heads" records the names as: Andre Nault, J.B. Ritchot, Romain Nault, Benjamin Nault, Edouard Perrault, Prosper Nault, Amable Gaudry, Baptiste Nault, J. Sansregret and his son and Baptiste Goudreau and his three sons. (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1982: 60.)

The Sansregret family involved in this incident is most likely Jean Baptiste Sansregret (1824) and his half brother Louis Sansregret (b. 1825), neither one had sons old enough to be present. Jean Baptiste "Johnny" was a buffalo hunter from St. Francois Xavier and did not own land at Red River, his brother Louis had lot 186 at St. Norbert. These two brothers also supported Louis Riel at Batoche in 1885. Jean Baptiste's son Pierre was active and his daughter Marguerite was married to Resistance activist Guillaume Laplante. Louis Sansregret's sons Andre and John were active in the 1885 Resistance.

Since Jean Baptiste Tourond (the Baptiste Goudreau listed above) was one of Riel's councilor's and had been appointed along with Jean Baptiste Lepine to patrol the settlement and warn of anyone trying to stake claims, it is likely he and his three brothers, Jacques, Isidore and Joseph who are noted above, since his sons are too young to have participated.



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